

shiningworld

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Newsletter June 2014

What's Happening....James recently completed a successful week-long seminar in Berlin. We have to compliment our dear friend Matthias for organizing such a great event and also the brave souls who suffered 37 degree heat on the forth floor with no-air conditioner! Not to mention poor Ramji who never missed a beat in spite of the heat 😊

Ramji went on to teach a weekend seminar/webinar in Bavaria last weekend which was also very successful, thank you Tan for a great job too. The last seminar before we leave Europe for the US takes place this weekend in Amsterdam.

Pics of seminars:

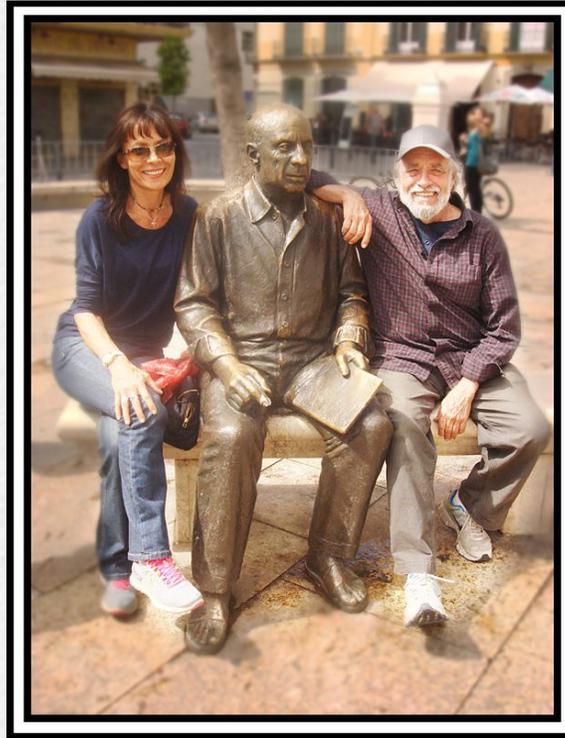




We are leaving Spain for good!

Isvara gives and Isvara takes away, so we shall see what transpires next. We loved our time in the beautiful Iberian Peninsula and are somewhat sad to leave, but we are also pretty dispassionate about it. The pics below show one of our 'last suppers' with our dear friend Dagmar from South Africa who came to visit and Ramji and I taking a pose with Spain's great claim to Art, Picasso. We will be back in the US next week.





Bye Bye Picasso!

Lesson Two of The Essence of Enlightenment a Big Success!

We are improving the teaching webinars and are very happy with how this is working out. We had over 60 people from all over the world taking part in the recent webinar teaching on Chapter 2. Thanks to Peggy for helping streamline the guidelines for the webinar and again to Matthias for doing such an excellent job of running the webinar. Thanks also to all of you who so kindly made donations, we very much appreciate the support as keeping Shiningworld going is a full time job for both Ramji and me.

The audio file and transcript of lesson 2 is available on the website: Link:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwPoLoomzatJeUVGTWE5WGZ1UEo/edit>

New in The Shop: Berlin 2014 MP3 available.

The Next Webinar: The date for lesson three will be Sunday, 20th July and will be held in our home in Bend, Oregon USA.

Lesson 3 on Chapter 3: The Means of Knowledge can be found below with the questions above the answers to lesson 2.

New Satsangs

James Posted 100 pages of interesting New Satsangs. His favorites are The Essence of Inquiry, Experiencing and Non-Experiencing Witness. I have also posted almost 200 pages of e-satsangs. The recurring theme in most of mine is the identity between Awareness-Isvara-jiva, the most important teaching of all in our view and where many inquirers get stuck.

E-Book of How to Attain Enlightenment now on Amazon: Link:

http://www.amazon.com/How-Attain-Enlightenment-Vision-Nonduality/dp/1591810949/ref=tmm_pap_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1402502521&sr=1-1

Recommended Reading
James recommends this book:

CONTEMPORARY NON DUALITY
*Dispelling the Myths and Misleading Teachings of
Contemporary Non-duality (Neo-Advaita and Neo Buddhism)*
by John LeKay

Essence of Enlightenment Course

Answers to Lesson 2: Knowledge and Experience.

- 1) Because there are so many paths, each of which offers a different approach.
- 2) Because it assumes that enlightenment can be attained through karma like any worldly action.
- 3) The idea that the subject and the object are different.
- 4) Because the doer of action can only produce limited results and liberation is limitless. Enlightenment is the very nature of the doer. He or she cannot do something to get what he or she already has.
- 5) The fact that the subject and the object are not separate.
- 6) No, because I am already experiencing the self. I cannot experience it as an object because I am it.
- 7) Yes
- 8) Convert my desire for experience of the self into a desire to know the self.
- 9) Yes. Because the self and the mind are not in the same order of reality. The self is always present whether the mind is thinking or not.
- 10) A) The "I" notion, an idea in the intellect. B) the doer/enjoyer
- 11) Because the ego is doer/enjoyer. If it dies it will not get to enjoy its enlightenment.
- 12) Ignorance of the wholeness of the self.
- 13) No. Because desire is an effect of ignorance. Attempts to remove it reinforce it.
- 14) Because I am awareness and awareness is present in every all three periods of time: past, present and future.
- 15) No. It only happens now.
- 16) Because awareness is beyond time.
- 17) Because reality is non-dual; the subject and object are always one.
- 18) Because I am already experiencing oneness. Experience is the self, awareness, and only the self exists.
- 19) Because states change and awareness does not change.
- 20) Because awareness is subtler than the mind.

- 21) The bliss of awareness is complete confidence in the knowledge of one's wholeness. It does not come and go. Experiential bliss comes and goes.
- 22) Because you are eternal awareness and you have never not been awareness. Everyone else is also awareness so there is no way to distinguish yourself from anyone else.

3) Lesson 3 with Questions - The Means of Knowledge

Chapter 3 - The Means of Self Knowledge

Enlightenment is the hard and fast knowledge that I am ordinary awareness and not the experiencing entity I think I am. It is only knowledge for one simple reason: I am already free. As we have just concluded, any attempt to experience the self or experience enlightenment or attain a permanent state of consciousness, is a waste of time. What I should be seeking is self knowledge. But knowledge does not just land on one's window sill like a little bird and tweet itself. Knowledge, which is the content of everything, requires a means.

With our God given means of knowledge...perception and inference...we can know things through experience and draw certain conclusions. These means require objects. The senses require objects. The heart needs feelings to feel. For its enjoyment there is a universal pool of emotions...desire, fear, greed, love, kindness, sympathy, compassion, envy, jealousy, etc. The intellect requires thoughts which it drawn from a vast world of ideas.

People who are dissatisfied with their lives and who want to feel something special and extraordinary often criticise Vedanta as merely an 'intellectual' path. Usually they say that spirituality is about love and the 'heart.' It is, but not the way they think, as we will see later in Chapter 12. Even if the heart is extremely sensitive it cannot feel you because you are subtler than your heart. You feel things through your heart. You are prior to what you think and feel. We are not for or against feelings or thoughts; they are a

simple fact of life. But it is wrong to say that Vedanta is intellectual knowledge because no concept can describe you, everything that is. That is not to say that the intellect, which is just a function in consciousness/awareness, is not intimately involved in self knowledge. So the idea that it should be transcended or discarded is not correct either. Without it you cannot gain freedom.

If you only seek freedom because you think you are not free... which you do... then you should dismiss your search for the truth as 'intellectual' and be happy as you are because the idea that you are bound is purely an 'intellectual' notion as well. An ignorant intellect may be the problem but ignorance is not the only option for the intellect.

The final result of Vedantic inquiry is not intellectual knowledge 'of' the self. The knowledge "I am actionless ordinary unconcerned unborn awareness" destroys the notion "I am a limited personal entity subject to suffering" and itself disappears leaving you as you always were, free of concepts and free of experience itself.

The Self is Not an Object

The self is not an object. For it to become an object there would have to be another 'you' to experience it, but it is a matter of common sense that there is only one 'you.' The self is also indestructible. It is non-dual awareness. So it is impossible to split it into two conscious parts and get one part to experience the other part. Even if you could split it in two, both parts would have the same nature and nothing would be gained because the experience of both parts would be the same. Furthermore, even if it were divisible who would divide it? Since it is not an agent it cannot divide itself. Finally, experience seems like it is a matter of a conscious subject experiencing an inert object but consciousness is everything, the subject and the object, and it is never inert. It is always just non-dual consciousness. Even when Ignorance apparently turns the self into subject and object, neither the subject, the experiencing entity, or the objects are actually conscious, so the subject does not actually experience the objects although it certainly seems to. The subject...the experiencing entity, which thinks it is conscious...is actually an object known to you, witnessing awareness. So what is experience? Experience is always only awareness experiencing itself. Duality is not involved. As we shall see, duality is only a belief.

So it seems that as far as self knowledge is concerned, God made a mistake. If God wanted us to know who we are, It would have given us a suitable means of knowledge. This why you often hear the refrain, “Oh, the self is a great mystery! It is beyond everything. No one can know what it is. It will forever remain a mystery!” People get quite romantic about the unknowability of God. It seems to turn them on.

Everyone Knows Objects but No One Knows the Subject

It must have been a big job to create the world in six days. After creating ‘fish and fowl’ over which we supposedly have ‘dominion’, it seems the Creator saved the best for last i.e. us. When It should have been out partying on Saturday night in anticipation of Its day of rest, It stayed up late creating us.

Perhaps It had the bodies on an assembly line with the brains stacked nearby and as the bodies passed It inserted the brains. But because it was late and poor God was exhausted after six days of hard work, It accidentally put the brain facing out towards the world of objects instead of inward toward the self and, well, the rest is history: everyone knows objects but nobody knows who they are.

We are fortunate, however, because there is a holy man in India...Kalki by name, an Avatar guy, who can save us from God’s mistake. For \$5,000, he will reverse your brain and you’ll get to know who you are! A lot of eager souls took him up on the offer, it seems, as he now has a huge golden temple. Evidently, the market for brain reversals is growing because it seems his son got in the business too. It is good news for the unenlightened because the price of enlightenment seems to have dropped recently owing to an increase on the supply side.

If the instruments we have are not suitable for knowing the self then how are we going to know it? It seems that consciousness wanted us to know because a very long time ago it revealed the Science of Self knowledge... Vedanta...for precisely that reason.

Vedanta is Not a Philosophy

The first thing we need to know about Vedanta is that it is not a philosophy. Philosophies are the contentions or beliefs of an individual or groups of individuals. Marx and Engels came up with the now defunct philosophy called Communism, which was meant to correct the problems of capitalism. Existentialism was all the rage in Europe in the last century. Where is existentialism today? Philosophies don't last because they are cooked up by people to serve the intellectual needs of the times. When times change... which they do...the philosophies are no longer relevant.

It is very important to appreciate the fact that Vedanta does not come from human beings. Human beings have limited understanding and on top of it they always have an agenda, usually to save or destroy the world in some way or the other. If it is not world domination or world saving, they seem to be perennially inclined to sell you something, convince you of something or to get you or your circumstances to change. They are not objective.

It is not a Religion or a Spiritual Path

Humans cook up philosophies and religions. Vedanta is not a religion either. It is not the result of the experiences of mystics. It accounts for mystic experiences but it is beyond mysticism. It is not a spiritual path. It is the knowledge behind all religions and spiritual paths.

Before we proceed, you should know that it is not necessary that you believe these statements. They are difficult to swallow because we have the vanity to suppose that because we see ourselves as 'the roof and crown of things' that everything meaningful comes from us. In any case its origins are reasonably unimportant because it does what it purports to do...it sets you free. If you properly expose your mind to Vedanta, you will see very clearly why we say that it is not a religion or a philosophy or a spiritual path invented by human beings. We say it is '*apurusheyajnanam*' which means 'not from a person.'

It is not Channelled Information

It is not channelled either. People, with all their biases, prejudices, beliefs and opinions are like old pipes; a lot of gunk accumulates in them. So when knowledge flows through them it inevitably gets polluted. We are the greatest polluters on earth. Yes, we have some knowledge, but knowledge

and ignorance sit side by side in the human mind and unfortunately most of us do not know the difference.

We don't want a means of knowledge that's made up of ignorance and truth. How will we separate them? Undiscriminating people swallow one with the other. You will not get free this way. Read the books of almost any modern teacher. You may find truth there...or some version of it...but the author's beliefs and opinions are usually so tightly woven into and around it...like vines wrapped around a tree trunk...that you swallow both and end up confused. This is not the way to freedom. The words of prophets and mystics should always be suspect.

It is Revealed Knowledge

People experience truth. But it does not come *from* them. It comes *to* them from 'outside.' It is *seen*. It is *heard*. It comes from an objective source, from beyond us. Revelations have been an intimate part of human experience forever. Just as an objective body of scientific knowledge about objects has built up over the centuries, an objective body of knowledge of consciousness has developed too.

A good example of this kind of knowledge is Einstein's 'discovery' of the law of relativity and gravity or Thomas Edison's discovery of electricity. To discover means to uncover something that was present but previously unknown. Relativity, gravity and electricity describe how the world works according to the laws of physics, not according to Einstein or Edison.

Gravity, relativity and electricity do not care if you believe in them. They operate the same way whether you understand what they are or not. Self knowledge is always here, right in front of our noses, but because we are blinded by duality, we do not see it.

It is very important that we trust knowledge, not people. People are not bad; they just tend to be ignorant, particularly on the topic of who they are. Ignorance is something that hides or veils knowledge and in the process allows wrong knowledge to happen in the form of projected beliefs and opinions, biases and prejudices. Because we don't know who we are, we take what we think and feel to be the truth but personal truth is unreliable.

Humans have studied fire since the beginning of time. At some point it became clear that fire has a certain nature and behaves according to certain

laws. Because of the knowledge of heat we can send rockets to Mars. Anyone who understands the knowledge and has the resources can send a rocket into space. There is nothing personal in it. In the same way, millions have had revelations of the non-dual nature of reality for thousands of years. The knowledge from these experiences has been extracted and put together in such a way that a science of consciousness...the self...developed.

One difference between Vedanta and modern material science is that one is focused on objects and the other is focused on the subject, consciousness. Additionally, knowledge gained by material science is constantly changing because the field of investigation is in a state of flux and the means of knowledge, the human mind, is conditioned by ignorance: the more we know about objects the more we don't know. The knowledge that Vedanta brings, however, does not change because the self does not change. So self knowledge is always good. Another difference between Vedanta and material science is: the purpose of self knowledge is freedom from existential suffering whereas the goal of material science is purely knowledge of the material forces playing in the field of consciousness...and how to use those forces to obtain certain desirable objects. The gain of desirable objects, as we know, does not remove suffering. It is tantamount to suffering.

It is important to know, however, that Vedanta has no quarrel with material or psychological knowledge gained through impersonal means i.e. experimentation. In Chapter 6 I introduce knowledge of the Causal and Subtle bodies gained in the last fifty years, which, I believe, contributes to Vedanta as a means of self knowledge.

It is Knowledge of Everything

Vedanta covers everything: the cosmos, the psyche and pure consciousness/awareness, whereas material science only covers the cosmos and psychological science only covers the psyche. Neither material science nor psychological science understands its relationship to each other, much less to consciousness, because their fields and methods of investigation are mutually exclusive. As human beings we are a combination of consciousness...some say spirit...and matter and exist in a complex world of laws and forces, so to understand ourselves we need a complete means of knowledge.

Vedanta is not just about realizing who you are beyond the objects appearing in you. To be sure, this knowledge is the essence of Vedanta but you cannot live as awareness in the world of objects unless you know the objects for what they are *and* how awareness and the objects...the experiencing individual and the field of experience...fit together. Vedanta is the knowledge of three orders of the one non-dual reality: (1) pure awareness with¹ and without² the capacity to create, (2) material objects³ and (3) the individual⁴.

Without putting too fine a point on it at this stage we can say that individuals are small bundles of desiring willing consciousness with various values and priorities. We need to understand them as they are. They find themselves involved in a world of gross and subtle material objects that are subject to impersonal forces and laws. If individuals don't understand the structure of the objective and subjective worlds in which they live, their knowledge is incomplete and their suffering will not abate.

The third aspect of Vedanta is pure consciousness with and without its capacity to create objects. It is called *Isvara* in our tradition, but if you insist on a Western word, you can call it God. We don't like the word God because the crazy ideas people have picked up from religion make it difficult to understand. You can't say a lot about consciousness apart from the objects appearing it because, although it is the most important piece of the existential puzzle, it is very simple and subtler than the subtlest object. We can say much more about consciousness in its role as creator of the individuals, the individuals themselves and the objects with which they interact.

To be free I need to understand myself as everything, not just as awareness isolated from the objects appearing in it. Enlightenment is not an experience that sets me free; it is complete knowledge of myself as awareness *and the objects appearing in me*. It takes time for self knowledge to become

1Isvara

2paramatma

3jagat

4jiva

complete because ignorance is terribly persistent. You have to hear the teachings over and over and chip away at the ignorance little by little.

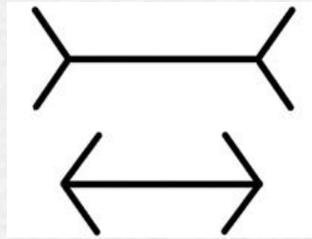
Many people have realized who they are in some kind of experiential way and claim that they are fully 'cooked', but we do not call this enlightenment. These fully cooked people are actually half-baked, if you must know, because they only have partial knowledge of reality. It is only in the land of the blind that the one eyed man is king. Many do not live righteous lives and seem to enjoy confusing seekers with outlandish views of enlightenment. If you don't understand the big picture: how everything fits together, how is it all the same and yet different, you are still unenlightened.

What is Knowledge?

At the beginning of the teaching we need to get our terminology straight. When I use words you should know what they mean. Everyone agrees on what the word tree refers to but most do not agree on what the word God or consciousness means. Knowledge is a word we have been using so far without a proper definition.

Knowledge is something that cannot be negated, something you can always count on. Information is not knowledge. That General Motors stock is \$43 today is not knowledge. It is only information because tomorrow it maybe \$42. You can't count on it to be at \$43 forever.

Knowledge is beyond experience. It trumps experience every time. It is extremely important to know that you can operate your life confidently on the basis of knowledge but that your confidence is always compromised when you operate only on the basis of knowledge garnered through your experience. Experience is valuable...life is experience...and most of us run our lives based on experience alone; we base our actions on how we feel, not what we know. There is no law against it but if you want to be happy you need to know that experience is unreliable. When you look at the diagram below you will experience the horizontal lines to be of different lengths. But if you measure them you will see that they are exactly the same. Knowledge says one thing, experience another.



We take our interpretation of experience to be knowledge, but it is not knowledge. If you operate solely on the basis of your feelings...fears and desires...you will produce unwanted results because reality...the world in which experience takes place...does not care what you feel. It is an impersonal matrix of objects, forces, rules and conscious beings that behave independently of you. With knowledge as your guide you will not make mistakes because you will not find yourself in conflict with what is. For example, intuition is a particularly prized feeling among spiritual individuals, but it is unreliable. You may have a correct insight or intuition on a particular person or situation at one moment and find that insight or intuition contradicted by a different one later on.

When they send a space probe to Saturn, Saturn may be in the western sky but they launch it into the eastern sky. Experience tells you to send it west but knowledge says east. After a while the rocket circles around in the gravitational field of Mars increasing its velocity and is then shot off in a southerly direction even though at the time Saturn is in the north. It stays on course as the planets continually change positions but years later it eventually enters the atmosphere of Saturn! With experience as a guide it would never get there. Isn't it amazing that after years a tiny piece of metal sent from a planet millions of miles away can suddenly start orbiting around a constantly moving object and collect data! Only knowledge makes this possible. Information, beliefs, opinions, feelings...all the human stuff...are not reliable.

We find ourselves in a cosmos that is made of knowledge. A tree is knowledge, a dog is knowledge, the elements are knowledge and human beings are just knowledge programmed to function in a certain way to serve the interests of the total. It is vital to our happiness that we understand the nature of reality. You can count on Vedanta. It is as good today as it was three thousand years ago because it is knowledge based. It's like the eyes. They do what they are intended to do. There is no need for a new eye. And

if a new improved eye is needed consciousness will evolve it over millions of years. Likewise, there is no reason to invent a new teaching for 'modern' people because we are what we have always been and the means of knowledge that has been setting individuals free for thousands of years is perfect.

How Does Vedanta Work?

Our normal means of knowledge work because there are objects that can be known. But since the self is beyond perception or inference it cannot be known as an object. Yoga and other practices give you experience of various subtle states of mind but Vedanta doesn't tout self experience because, as noted above, you are already experiencing the self.

We don't need to prove that you exist either. Believe it or not some people in the spiritual world actually take it seriously when told that they don't exist. The Buddhists have been saying it forever...there is no self, it is all void, emptiness, etc...and the modern Neo-Advaita crowd, God bless them, are not embarrassed to say it either. We say there is only one self, it is everything and it is never not present.

To be fair, perhaps they mean that the ego doesn't exist, but even it exists. It is not real but it is not non-existent. There is no need to say you don't exist or to prove that you don't exist because that you exist is self evident. You don't need a mirror to know that you have eyes because seeing itself proves the existence of eyes. And you cannot deny the existence of something unless it does exist. No thing is non-existent. As soon as you think of it, it exists because objects are nothing more than the thought of objects. And as we have seen, experience only takes place in an apparently conscious mind as thoughts and feelings. So there is no such thing as non-existence, apart from the idea of non-existence.

But to know what you are and to know what it means to be who you are, you need a mirror. My experience of myself is not a mirror for you. Experience does not transfer from individual to individual. If it did and I was in love, I could put you in love. Knowledge transfers. If you have a lighted candle and put the wick of another candle next to it, the fire jumps from one to the other. Vedanta is word mirror that reveals what you are and what it means to be you. It does this by stripping away the erroneous notions you have about who you are. It reveals you to you, using the unexamined logic of your own

experience. The knowledge of you is in you and the experience of you is with you always, but there is still something to be known...or you would be free.

You need the big picture. It is not available because you identify with beliefs and opinions about who you are that are not in harmony with your nature as everything. It is seemingly not available here only because you believe that it is only attainable elsewhere.

You Can't Study Vedanta

Vedanta is a means of inquiry that needs to be taught. The ego usually thinks it is an expert on everything relating to itself and does not take to the idea of teaching. Spiritual types deluded by the experiential view often cite Ramana Maharshi as evidence that no teacher or teaching is necessary for liberation. Perhaps a highly qualified soul could 'get it' in one go but the chances are about the same as winning the lottery, probably less. Brainy types usually think they can get enlightened by synthesizing information from their study of the literature from various traditions, but this approach is equally ill-conceived. Reading or listening to someone talk about the self (Vedanta doesn't talk 'about' it; it reveals it through a particular method) does not work because no matter how smart you think you are, you wouldn't be inquiring if you weren't self ignorant. Ignorance operates as you listen and read, causing you to invariably misunderstand.

Furthermore, most seekers do not know the difference between knowledge and ignorance. They confuse their beliefs and opinions with knowledge. This means that I am not one to enlighten myself. I need an impersonal means of knowledge that is ignorance free and I need to have someone who has been set free by such a means to teach me. It should also be brought to your attention that someone claiming that enlightenment is experiential who cites his or her experience as proof of enlightenment and expects his or her words to be seen as scripture may or may not be enlightened but is not qualified to teach the self. Anyone can have a life changing epiphany and define it as enlightenment. To uncritically accept his or her teaching and instructions is to ask for trouble.

Generally people who are led to Vedanta have been seeking for a long time. It is not suitable for entry-level seekers. When a person gets to a certain point in life...when they are no longer in thrall to experience...they are led

to Vedanta. Fruit plucked from the tree before it is ripe is never good. This is why we don't advertise. It comes when you are ready for it. We cannot teach those who are not ready. It is a waste of time for both the teacher and the student.

I sincerely and enthusiastically tried to set myself free full time for three years. I read all the books, went to India, hobnobbed with yogis and gurus, did many practices, yet I still flunked the enlightenment test and failed to matriculate. I got so fed up that I quit seeking and vowed (against all odds) to become a normal person. The very day I called off the search I met my teacher and it became obvious that I needed more than a technique. I felt very small and ignorant but at the same time it was terribly liberating to discover that there was a time tested impersonal means of knowledge and a respectable teaching tradition available to me. To see self knowledge working in another human being and understand that it had set him free was all I needed.

Listening

The first stage is listening. Usually, when you hear something you immediately begin formulating a reply in your mind. You hear the words and react impulsively but you do not actually listen to what is being said or where it is coming from. You cannot expect Vedanta to work if this is how you approach it because Vedanta is much more than a few spiritual ideas aimed at your ego. It is a body of knowledge that needs to be assimilated in its entirety. It employs a particular methodology...superimposition and negation...that needs to be worked on you until you are capable of working it on yourself. In this stage you only have to keep your mind open, which involves setting aside your beliefs and opinions temporarily. It is not easy. But you need to let the teaching and the teacher do the work. Knowledge has its own power. It will do the work for you, if you let it. At some point the Vision of Non-Duality will begin to form up in your mind and you will be able to work on yourself.

Reflecting

In the second stage⁵ you are asked to look at what you believe and think you are *in light of what you have heard*, not the other way around. To reflect

⁵manana

properly you need to surrender your idea of who you are to the knowledge of who you are as unfolded by the scripture. Normally, we retain the right to evaluate what we hear, but in the case of Vedanta this right has been ceded to the scriptures. You appreciate the fact that it, not you, is the authority. There are a lot of things you have got right and there are a lot that you have got wrong. So this stage is a winnowing process, a sifting, during which you discard your ignorance, based on an appreciation of the unassailable logic of Vedanta, which in turn is based on the unexamined logic of your own experience. Vedanta just plugs you into the deeper part of yourself, the part that knows, the part that sees, the part that contains and resolves life's dualities into the non-dual vision.

Assimilation

The final stage⁶ is the result of listening and reflection. It is the complete assimilation of the knowledge that destroys the network of ignorance-based desires and one's sense of doership. It has a dramatic experiential impact in so far as one's life becomes free and peaceful and completely fulfilled.

Inquiry does not mean asking the question 'Who am I?' Inquiry is the daily application of the teachings of Vedanta to the numerous troubling self doubts appearing in the mind in the form of the inexorable stream of fears and desires, likes and dislikes that disturb it. It is discrimination, disciplining the mind to think from the platform of wholeness, not from lack. It requires constant vigilance. We are not trying to kill or transcend the mind. If you find yourself in a human body your mind will be active from womb to tomb. It can be educated and purified but never destroyed. It is here at the behest of a power much greater than you and it is here to stay. In fact, it is not really 'your' mind.

Normally the mind is your boss. It thinks for you and tells you what to do. The experiential notion of enlightenment is a clumsy attempt to address the issue of control...which is possible, but not by transcending or destroying the mind. Vedanta teaches what the mind is and why what it thinks is either in harmony with reality or not.

The teachings include a subsidiary body of knowledge, commentaries by great sages that resolve certain apparent contradictions inherent in the nature

of reality...the seeming paradox presented by the appearance of duality superimposed on non-dual reality, and a brilliant method, superimposition and negation, by which self ignorance is removed.

Lesson #3 The Means of Knowledge

1) Why do I need a means of knowledge for Enlightenment?

1) Because reality is non-dual. I am already free. I am always experiencing myself.

2) What means of knowledge do I have and why are they inadequate for moksa?

2) Perception and inference...the senses, mind and intellect. They are inadequate because they only provide knowledge of objects and the self is not an object.

3) Where do knowledge and ignorance exist?

3) In the intellect

4) Does knowledge of the self set you free? If yes, why? If no, why?

4) No. Because self knowledge negates the doer, the intellect. An ego that sees the self as an object of experience or knowledge is not free of itself. Freedom is freedom from the ego. Only the self is free. The ego is always attached to something.

5) Vedanta is a valid means of knowledge, not a philosophy, a religion or the mysticism. Why are philosophies, religions and the experience of mystics not valid means of knowledge?

5) Because they are beliefs, opinions and interpreted experiences of individuals or groups of individuals. What applies to an individual does not apply to everyone. A valid means of knowledge applies to everyone.

6) Vedanta is self knowledge. Why is it a valid means of knowledge?

6) Because it applies to everyone.

7) Why does it apply to everyone?

7) Because everyone is the self.

8) What kind of knowledge is Vedanta?

8) It is revealed knowledge

9) Why is it scientific?

9) Because it can be confirmed at any time by anyone who applies the teachings.

10) Why is Vedanta the knowledge of everything?

10) Because it is knowledge of consciousness and consciousness is everything that exists.

11) What are the three orders of reality?

11) (1) pure awareness with and without the capacity to create, (2) material objects and (3) the individual.

12) Is self knowledge only knowledge of the self or is it knowledge of the self and the objects appearing in it?

12) Knowledge of the self and the objects appearing in it.

13) What is the difference between knowledge and information?

13) You can always count on knowledge. It is good in every situation and at all times. Information is sometimes useful and sometimes not.

14) Why is interpreted experience not useful for a happy life?

14) Because it is unreliable.

15) If Vedanta does not provide an experience of the self, how does it reveal the self?

15) It removes ignorance of the self

16) What forms does self ignorance take?

16) Beliefs and opinions about the nature of reality.

17) Why can't you read and study Vedanta?

17) Because your self ignorance will cause you to misunderstand the meaning of the teachings. You will confuse ignorance and knowledge.

18) What is the first stage of Vedanta and how does it work?

18) Listening without interpreting the meaning of the words.

19) Why is it difficult? Because the teachings are counterintuitive; they contradict long-standing beliefs.

20) What is the second stage and how does it work?

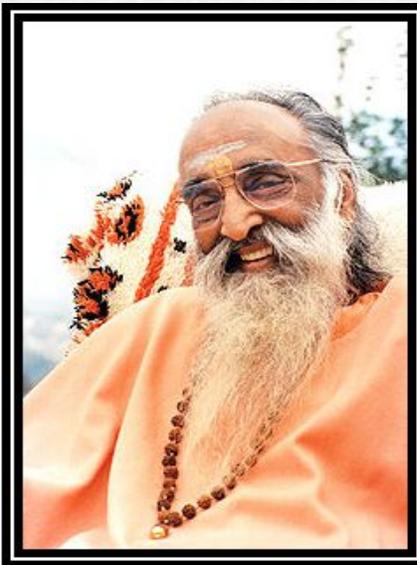
20) Reflecting. Looking at what I believe in light of the teachings and discarding those beliefs that do not line up with the teaching.

21) Why is inquiry not asking “Who am I?”

21) Because the answer is already known...I am consciousness.

22) What is the practice of Vedanta (inquiry)?

22) The daily application of the teachings to the numerous troubling self doubts appearing in the mind in the form of the inexorable stream of fears and desires, likes and dislikes that disturb it. It is discrimination, disciplining the mind to think from the platform of wholeness, not from lack.



Ramji's Guru